



For Immediate Release

Easton, MD – May 25, 2022

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, Tuesday, May 24, 2022

These highlights only reflect the business items covered from the Council's approved agenda. To view the complete County Council meeting, please visit: Talbot County Meeting Videos - Talbot County, Maryland (www.talbotcountymd.gov).

Council members Callahan, Leshner, Divilio, and Price were in attendance. Council member Pack was absent.

I. Certificate of Recognition to Kelly Griffith, Ed. D., Superintendent, Talbot County Public Schools

The Council provided a Certificate of Recognition for Dr. Griffith in appreciation of her devotion and commitment to the children of Talbot County, their parents and caregivers, and the community-at-large for more than 34 years as a teacher, principal, administrator and superintendent for Talbot County Public Schools.

Council member Price stated, "It has been an honor to work with you. I got to know you while you were principal and being on the Council and working on the budgets. It was really great having you there and we appreciate everything that you've done. We're going to miss you. Thank you for all of your hard work and your heart shows you care.

Council member Divilio added, "I've seen what you've implemented in schools firsthand with my children who are now in the schools. And think about the generations that you've seen go through there. I have a lot of pride in the public schools here. I know that you do too, and it does show that you are out there cheering them all and rallying. The public school is the largest educator in Talbot County and it's a big driving force that puts kids into programs such as Chef Cook and Johnson and Wales, college sports, or Chesapeake College through dual enrollment. We have the great connections and the ability to raise our own and bring them back and you've done that. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude."

Council Vice President Leshner commented, "You have my gratitude for the transformation that you have brought to education in Talbot County. Your commitment that every child will learn, grow and succeed is measurable in many ways. The reduced dropout rates and

the increased graduation rates are the successes that we see in program after program through the schools. You leave a legacy behind you in Talbot County. Thank you for all your work.”

Council President Callahan said, “You're such a special person. I have enjoyed working with you for the last eight years. You've made many, many friends over the years and a lot of people respect you. And I appreciate your professionalism and everything you have done. Thank you.”

Caption: Pictured left to right are Council member Laura Price, Council member Frank Divilio, Kelly Griffith, Superintendent of Talbot County Public Schools, Council President Chuck Callahan, and Council Vice President Pete Lesh.



II. Proclamation: National Gun Violence Awareness Day – June 3, 2022 – Mary Hunt-Miller, Upper Shore Local Group, Maryland Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Susan Moran, Clerk to the Council, read the proclamation into the record which states in part, “Every day more than 110 Americans are killed by gun violence, in addition to the more than 200 individuals who are shot and wounded. Gun violence is more important than ever due to the COVID-19 pandemic which, after more than two years of increased gun

sales, has exacerbated gun violence, caused an increase in calls to suicide and domestic violence hotlines, and has increased community gun violence. Talbot County encourages citizens to honor the lives of its victims and survivors, to renew our commitment to reducing gun violence by pledging to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands, and to encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our residents safe.

The Council unanimously approved this proclamation.

Ms. Hunt-Miller stated, "I want to thank the County Council very much for their willingness to give us this proclamation for Talbot County. It's important. I got in the car today to come here and turned on the radio and heard the terrible news about another school shooting in Texas. So, the fact that my own county is willing to speak up and say we need to have awareness of gun violence is very moving. For me, and for the rest of the people, the volunteers in my organization, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, we wish to thank you very much for raising awareness of this whole problem in our country."

Council member Divilio stated, "Thankfully, we're not seeing gun violence like that repeated every single day monthly. But I appreciate anyone who steps up and wants to make the community safer. And I would love to see you connect with organizations and businesses like Albright's Gun Shop, Shore Sportsmen, and the Rod and Gun Club about gun and hunter safety programs they offer to the community."

Council member Price added, "I agree with Mr. Divilio in that partnering with these organizations who work so hard to encourage safe habits, teaching the right way to do things and working with who's out there promoting this message to the public. Working together, as always, is the best way to keep people safe."

Caption: Pictured left to right are front row: Mary Hunt-Miller, Council Vice President Pete Leshner and Suzanne Todd. Back row: Council member Frank Divilio, Council President Chuck Callahan and Council member Laura Price.



III. Update and Request by Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Inc. (MSBH) – Kathryn Dilley, LCSW-C, Executive Director, Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Inc.; Shannon Joyce, MPH, CHES, Behavioral Health Coordinator, PASRR & Aging, Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Inc.

Ms. Dilley stated, “One of the things we're hoping to do this evening is to get your endorsement and support for continuing to serve in FY23 as your core service agency in oversight, planning and development for the Public Behavioral Health System in Talbot County. Since COVID-19, we've tripled the amount of responsibilities that we've had and the need is certainly there, as mental health and substance use needs and services are on the rise. Our work has been to try to get ahead of that and find ample resources to bring into the community. So, we've been working very diligently with our state and federal partners to do that.”

Dilley stated that May is Mental Health Awareness Month as well as MSBH’s 30th Anniversary. The mission of the organization is to continually improve the provision of behavioral health services for residents of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s and Talbot counties through effective coordination in care in collaboration with consumers, their natural support systems, and providers and the community at large. The organization’s vision is a rural healthcare delivery system that is clinically and culturally competent. This

system will ensure access, have a community focus, be cost-effective, and be integrated to serve the community as a whole.

Dilley noted, “One of the biggest things that the state is focusing on in the Behavioral Health Administration in the Department of Health is how we enhance our crisis response system. MSBH oversees the Crisis Response System, not just for the five counties of the metro region, but for all nine counties on the Eastern Shore. The focus recently has been on the child and adolescent population, specifically meeting with children and adolescents in the agency’s transitional age youth. MSBH is also piloting a care traffic control system to be able to fast track individuals that have met with crisis response into treatment. This is parallel with 988, which is the national suicide line that is going live this summer in July. MSBH continues to bring in funding for our population facing opioid dependency and treatment needs through crisis beds, the safe station development project, and adolescent clubhouse initiatives. MSBH is part of the Bay Bridge Partnership, working on managing people in crisis on the Bay Bridge and other locations. MSBH also started a farming wellness initiative to look at new innovative ways to do community education and partnering activities that address the stigma around getting mental health help in that community. MSBH is also working with Channel Marker, doing an expansion to that facility to include bringing on eight mental health crisis beds. MSBH has a new COVID 19 wellness ambassador, working specifically with our wellness and recovery centers and our mental health and behavioral health providers to address any stigma or concerns that clients and patients have with either adhering to masking and universal precautions to keep themselves. In FY21 Talbot County served 1,589 individuals with mental health services and 707 individuals with substance use services through the public behavioral health system.

Joyce reported that MSBH attends and participates in the Local Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council, Talbot County Goes Purple, Shore Regional Health Opioid Task Force, and EOC/COVID-19 calls. Dilley is serving as the Chair for the Talbot Family Network/Local Management Board for FY22. MSBH hired a youth outreach coordinator who is working with the Talbot County Public Schools to support the anti-vaping campaign. MSBH sponsored the Out of Darkness Suicide Awareness Walk on September 25 and organized the first in-person regional Going Purple Together event on September 24. MSBH coordinated and facilitated Shore Regional Health meetings for high-risk behavioral health consumers who are returning to their community. MSBH supports the leadership and participation in the Talbot County Mental Health Workgroup with a focus on the public school system and what we can do in response to the COVID 19 pandemic to address the gaps in services. MSBH also has a behavioral health assisted living pilot for individuals with a primary mental health diagnosis who need assistance with activities of daily living. Ms. Dilley announced that their 24-hour hotline is 1-888-407-8018. The MSBH office number is 410-770-4801.

The Council voted unanimously to approve the FY23 Letter of Agreement with Mid Shore Behavioral Health.

- IV. Update from Talbot County Department of Social Services on Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center - Linda Webb, Director, Talbot County Department of Social Services; Juana Blue, Assistant Director for Family Investment Administration, Talbot County Department of Social Services

Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

Talbot County received \$72,133 in direct services federal funds for LIHWAP for two years. The new program runs from February 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. It is first-come, first-served. LIHWAP is a one-time payment toward arrearages for residential: Water services (disconnect prevention) and Wastewater services. LIHWAP provides a one-time grant of \$100 - \$2,000 (paid to water provider) and paid toward residential water and/or wastewater arrearages (more than 30 days past due and with at least \$100 owed). Payment must satisfy the account to be in "good standing" with the utility provider.

For LIHWAP eligibility, participants must be a Maryland resident who is responsible for water and/or wastewater bill, live at the property for which assistance is being requested, and meet program income criteria. Households with at least one member currently receiving one of the following are considered automatically eligible: Office of Home Energy Programs, Temporary Cash Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Disability Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income, Means-tested Veterans Programs, and Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Talbot County DSS currently has a relationship with Easton Utilities and the Towns of Trappe and Oxford and has paid out \$1,800 to date.

Applications to LIHWAP can be completed online at <https://mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us/> or dropped off, mailed, faxed or emailed to:

Talbot County Department of Social Services
301 Bay Street, Unit 5, Easton, MD 21601
Phone: 410-770 4848, Option 4
Fax: 410-820-7117
Email: talbot.customer@maryland.gov

Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center

A Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is a comprehensive response to incidents of child abuse, provided by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals in a child-friendly location. It is a model of best practice to reduce childhood trauma. Through an 18-year partnership with the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health, the Talbot CAC provides Forensic Interviews, Mid Shore Medical Program (Forensic Medical Examinations, 5 County Mid Shore region), Family Advocacy, Mental Health and Other Therapies, Independent Living Skills, Team Building Activities, and Emergency Financial Assistance. So far in 2022, the CAC has provided 437 Family Advocate sessions, serving 123 children and adults. The CAC has conducted 60 forensic interviews and 13 medical examinations. The CAC has a new Medical Director, has provided 63 training opportunities to members of the Multi-

Disciplinary Team and had its re-accreditation site visit on May 10, 2022 and has been recommended for re-accreditation.

Council member Divilio stated, “I can't thank you enough for what you do in such difficult circumstances to help the family as a whole get back together. It's by far one of the most important and troubling issues affecting Talbot County right now and it has been for a long time. Thank you for being there for those families.”

- V. Presentation on Chapel District Elementary School Feasibility Study – Kevin Shafer, Director of Operations, Talbot County Public Schools; Tom King, AIA, Principal, Noelker and Hull Associates, Inc. – Mr. Shafer asked the Council for a letter of support for TCPS to continue the planning process to develop a plan for addressing the infrastructure issues at Chapel District Elementary School. The 30-year-old building has infrastructure issues that need to be addressed immediately. Tom King presented the three possible options for addressing the issues:

Option 1: Modernize the existing building systems and spaces to meet current code, life safety, and educational functions with no new construction. This option does not meet all of the space needs in the Educational Specification space summary. (\$15,930,530 for a 46,070 sq.ft. building)

Option 2: Modernize the existing building systems and spaces and construct new additions to meet all space needs, as defined in the Educational Specifications, site improvements, and educational functions. (\$19,099,608 for a 55,600 sq.ft. building)

Option 3: Construct a totally new elementary school on the same site to meet all educational program and space needs as defined in the educational specifications. Demolish the existing building and reconfigure the site amenities. (\$21,862,808 for a 55,600 sq.ft. building)

The current enrollment at the school is 346. The State has projected the school will have a need for 363 enrolled students. Talbot County has projected that the County will have a need for 471 students based on the possibility of several housing developments being built in the County.

Kevin Shafer reported that the Board of Education supported Option 3, which also offers an opportunity for expansion. The Board of Education believes Option 3 is the best option as it provides the longest life expectancy, the least amount of instructional disruption, best value in terms of comparable costs and addresses site limitations. Mr. King stated it is his professional opinion that Option 2 is the best option based on the enrollment figures he has as of today's date.

Council discussion ensued about the timeline for the project, waiting to send a letter until the housing projections in the County are more firm, evaluating other school needs in the county, and the property's flexibility for athletic fields at the site. The Council voted unanimously to approve the motion to send a letter in support of the Talbot County Public Schools continuing the planning process to address the issues with the Chapel District

Elementary School. Ms. Price requested the letter include a statement about the discrepancy in enrollment figures based on anticipated development projects in the County.

VI. Introduction of Administrative Resolution:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TRANSFER OF PAID
PARAMEDICS PARTICIPATING IN THE EMPLOYEES' COMBINED SYSTEM TO
THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' PENSION SYSTEM (LEOPS)

The Council voted unanimously to introduce and approve the resolution.

Council member Price stated, "It was a long time coming for our Sheriff's deputies and we're happy to be able to include our paramedics. Hopefully next year we'll get the legislation to get our correctional officers into the Correctional Officers Retirement System (CORS) program as well as it's very important with what they do as 30 years is way too long in that field."

VII. Update on Easton Airport – Micah Risher, Manager, Easton Airport and Jack Pettit, President, Airport Board

Mr. Risher provided the following overview

- Airport Business Remains Strong as a Self-Sustaining Enterprise (30 years) with businesses growing/expanding. Hangar space is at a premium (3-5 year waitlist)
- Runway Improvement Project - Remains on schedule and completing enabling objectives
- Community Engagement - Tours/Events and ACE Program coming back post-Covid

Capital Improvements Update

- FAA Grant Status AIP 47 - Pay Request for \$789,449.80 submitted on May 19, 2022 for Reimbursement for Aviation Easements
- FFY2022 FAA AIP Grant - Grant application submitted requesting to move to Design phase (project total of \$1,885,261.00) – runway construction
- Obstruction Removal Program Phase 2- Work is complete and Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) to reimburse \$297,818
- Automated Weather System (AWOS) - Replacement - Coordinating with MAA on funding solution - 2 years (Procurement & Construction)

Talbot Business Center

- FAA expected to award AIP Grant to Design the Runway Project by September 2022
- All leases expire on December 31, 2022 and will continue "month to month" into 2023
- Expect First Construction Package Grant to be awarded by September 2023
- Construction is planned to begin by January 2024 – will be partnering with the Talbot County Repurposing Center on recycling materials from demolition – outstanding issue with Forest Conservation Act and working with the Town of Easton.

Improvements Update

- Security - Additional security cameras and “command post” installed in office; Gate controllers replaced & modernized; and new keycards and access tracking
- Terminal Building - Lobby painted; new signage; digital displays for advertising Talbot Tourism focused brochure stands; flex workspace and meeting room; and curbing and accessibility improvements in the pipeline

Community Outreach

- Events & Activities - Successful Easton Airport Cruise-In, Runway Safety Action Team Meeting, Walk & Talk Open House Tours, Business After School Program
- Headlines & Community Relations - Obstruction Removal Program Updates
ESN Staff Interviews, *Shore Monthly* Interview, Supporting Talbot Softball and Ballfield, ACE Flights & Passport Program
- Noise Abatement - Updated graphics and materials, New brochures and handouts, pilot community outreach; continue advocating our “Good Neighbor” policies

Statistics

- Air Traffic operations returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021
- Flight Training accounted for 59% of the activity with 43,268 ops
- Military Flight Training accounted for nearly 25% of the VFR Pattern activity and 15% of the total traffic with 10,743 operations
- Itinerant General Aviation & Military activity accounted for 29,933 or nearly 41% of total operations (highest ever recorded)
- Business Users (Air Taxi/Charters) totaled 3,381 flights in 2021 (highest ever recorded)
- An average of 9 “charter style” operations occur daily (In 2011, the average was 3 per day)
- Fuel Statistics
 - 44% increase in sales – Jet-A
 - 40.1% increase in sales – Avgas

Mr. Pettit reported that there are going to be great opportunities in aviation in the future, especially for women. The ACE Program can help encourage students in Talbot County to consider aviation careers.

Mr. Risher reported that a woman just completed all of her flight training at Easton Airport and is now working as a commercial pilot.

Ms. Price reported that she is bringing 15 board members from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) to tour the airport in June.

VIII. County Manager’s Report: Jessica Morris, Assistant County Manager provided the report.

- No Board and Committee Appointments
- Request from Department of Public Works to Award *Bid No. 22-07*, REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – ENGINEERING SERVICES – COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWERAGE PLAN UPDATE –

2022/2023 REPORT OF THE REVIEW – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

After a review of the proposals submitted by Rauch, Inc. and Wallace-Montgomery, the Bid Review Committee recommended the engineering services be awarded to the low bidder, Rauch, Inc. in the amount of \$129,530.00.

The Council unanimously approved the bid award to Rauch, Inc.

- Request from County Manager to Award *Bid No. 22-01, REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – REAL PROPERTY FOR TALBOT COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX*

A total of 9 bids were received in response to Bid No. 22-01. The County Manager is recommending the award of the bid to Nova Sixa, LLC in the amount of \$6,000,000. The Council voted unanimously to approve the bid award to Nova Sixa, LLC.

Council Vice President Leshner stated, “I want to thank the staff team and the Sheriff in particular for his input in selecting the suitable location we heard tonight. We are working under a deadline from the airport property that we will have to inevitably move the Sheriff's Office sooner or later and this is an important step in that process. So thanks to all who've gotten us to this point.”

Council President Callahan added, “I think this is a big step for the citizens of Talbot County in public safety. The Council worked really hard and the staff worked really hard to find a location and I'm very proud of the selection that we've made.”

Request for Approval of 4th Quarter Budget Transfers for the Fiscal Year 2022 – Ken Davis, Acting Finance Director, presented the 4th quarter budget transfers. The summary of the transfers includes:

Salaries and Benefits – net decrease of \$825,070

Operating Expense – net decrease of \$1,072,700

Capital Outlay – net increase of \$240,500

Payments to Municipalities, Public Accommodations Tax – net increase of \$550,000

The Council voted unanimously to approve the 4th quarter budget transfers as outlined.

Request to Declare Tuesday, June 7, 2022 a Special Legislative Day

The Council voted unanimously to designate Tuesday, June 7, 2022 a Special Legislative Day for the purpose of introducing capital enabling legislation. The meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m. and be held in the Bradley Meeting Room.

Ms. Morris thanked the Council for approving the LEOPS transfer for paramedics, stating, “We have 37 Paramedics that will be eligible for LEOPS and we have the required 60% who have signed on to that program so that is truly a monumental event and we appreciate your support.”

Ms. Morris announced that County offices will be closed on Monday, May 30, 2022 in recognition of the Memorial Day holiday.

The Council's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 3 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room. The Council will be meeting with elected officials from the towns of Easton, Oxford, Queen Anne, St. Michaels and Trappe on Tuesday, June 7th at 5:00 p.m. in the Wye Oak Room, Talbot County Community Center, 10028 Ocean Gateway, Easton.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.